



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

mh  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/678,335	10/03/2003	Lawrence Edwin Wilkerson	EMPATHY	2559
7590	11/03/2004		EXAMINER	
Risto A. Rinne, Jr. Suite E 2173 East Francisco Blvd. San Rafael, CA 94901			HARRIS, CHANDA L	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3714	

DATE MAILED: 11/03/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/678,335	WILKERSON ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Chanda L. Harris	3714

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 October 2003.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.                    2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) 3-23 is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1,2 and 24-28 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
    1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
    3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                        | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

1. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. For a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must produce a useful, concrete, and tangible result. In the present case, the claimed invention comprises merely a plurality of questions that are answered by two participants. There is no useful, concrete, and tangible result that occurs as a result of providing a plurality of questions that are answered by two participants. Therefore, claim 1 is deemed to be directed to non-statutory subject matter.
  
2. Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. A mere arrangement of printed matter, though seemingly a "manufacture," is rejected as not being within the statutory classes. See *In re Miller*, 418 F.2d 1392, 164 USPQ 46 (CCPA 1969); *Ex parte Gwinn*, 112 USPQ 439 (Bd. App. 1955); and *In re Jones*, 373 F.2d 1007, 153 USPQ 77 (CCPA 1967). In the present application, the claimed printed matter set forth a mere arrangement of printed matter that is not functionally related to the substrate and, therefore, does not distinguish the invention from prior art in terms of patentability. Although printed matter must be considered, in this situation, it is not entitled patentable weight. The printed matter claimed herein conveys no meaningful information in regard to the substrate they are arranged on and do not require any size relationship of the substrate, and do not

require any particular substrate to effectively convey the information. Accordingly, there being no functional relationship of the printed material to the substrate, as noted above, there is no reason to give patentable weight to the content of the printed matter which, by itself, is non-statutory subject matter.

3. Claims 24-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The basis of this rejection is set forth in a two-prong test of:

- (1) whether the invention is within the technological arts; and
- (2) whether the invention produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result.

For a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must be within the technological arts. Mere ideas in the abstract (i.e., abstract idea, law of nature, natural phenomena) that do not apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts fail to promote the "progress of science and the useful arts" (i.e., the physical sciences as opposed to social sciences, for example) and therefore are found to be non-statutory subject matter. For a claim to pass muster, the recited limitations must somehow apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts.

In the present case, Claims 24-28 only recite an abstract idea. The recited steps of merely providing a plurality of questions, having a first participant provide a first set of answers to said at least some of the plurality of questions, having the first participant provide a second set of answers to said at least some of the plurality of questions attempting to anticipate how a second participant will answer each of said at least some

of the plurality of questions; having the second participant provide a third set of answers to said at least some of the plurality of questions; and having the second participant provide a fourth set of answers to said at least some of the plurality of questions attempting to anticipate how the first participant will answer each question does not apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts since all of the recited limitations can be performed in the mind of the user or by use of a pencil and paper. These limitations only constitute an idea of how to determine empathy.

Additionally, for a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must produce a useful, concrete, and tangible result. In the present case, the claimed invention merely provides a plurality of questions that are answered by two participants. There is no useful, concrete, and tangible result that occurs as a result of providing a plurality of questions that are answered by two participants.

Therefore, claims 24-28 are deemed to be directed to non-statutory subject matter as they are not of the technological arts and do not provide a useful, concrete, and tangible result.

#### ***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 3-23 and 29-31 are allowed.

#### ***Citation of Pertinent Prior Art***

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Von Fellenberg (US 4,627,818)
  - determining empathy
- Madison (US 3,764,135)
  - empathy game

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Chanda L. Harris whose telephone number is 703-308-8358. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 6:30am-4:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Derris Banks can be reached on 703-308-1745. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

*Chanda L. Harris*  
Chanda L. Harris  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3714

ch.